

EXHIBIT

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To: Montana Business & Labor Committee:
Subject: 2013 HB616

To me this issue is about freedom. I believe most freedom loving Montanans would say it is no ones business to whom a brewery chooses to sell their product. If politicians were trying to limit bakeries to only selling 40% of their product directly to the public the writers of that bill would be laughed out of Helena. Beer should be no different. More freedom is the answer to tough issues. I don't agree, but understand the MTA's point about an "unequal playing field". They like to talk about the expense of a liquor licenses, but fail to mention that just a few miles out of the populated areas licenses are much cheaper. Isn't that unfair? If the MTA feels there is an inequality they should fight to remove the restrictions on them not add restrictions to others. The only way to create a truly level playing field is to get rid of the quota system (like Colorado). Until the MTA proposes eliminating quotas it can be assumed they don't really want a level playing field and are just trying to protect their monopoly. I'm sure brewery would be willing to sit down and find a way to fairly reimburse those that had to unfairly purchase expensive licenses. Passing of HB616 won't end this issue. Until there is a true level playing field (no quotas) this will keep coming back every session. Instead of putting a Band-Aid on a broken arm lets buckle down and fix the root of the problem.

Ryan Pfeifle
Pfeifle Farms
Power MT
406-750-4366